CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: STORIES, QUOTES, AND ANECDOTES

p. 213-214

In Christopher Booker's (highly controversial) The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories, the author posits that all ideas in storytelling ultimately fall under one of seven core themes that have existed throughout dramatic history. Interestingly enough, all seven are easily correlated to corporate storytelling as much as to dramatic storytelling. In case you're unfamiliar with Booker, I'll share his original plot titles and character identifications, followed by sample adaptations of those plots and characters for our presentation strategy purposes:

65 Booker, Christopher. The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories. 2nd ed. London: Bloomsbury, 2019.

1. Overcoming the Monster

Our industry (the protagonist) has been seeking the security technology breakthrough (which our organization has successfully developed) to defeat hacking conglomerates (an antagonistic force) threatening our companies and customers (the heroes and the protagonist's homeland).

2. Rags to Riches

We started in a tiny garage with no heat, a cheap sewing machine (poor protagonist), and a dream of creating the best athletic wear in the world. We moved from the garage to the penthouse (acquires power, wealth, and/or a mate), but the top brands tried to shut us down and almost succeeded (loses it all). Ultimately, we came out on top (gains it back, growing as a person as a result).

3. The Quest

The market was demanding energy independence, and we knew the only path was through easily accessible and renewable resources. We had to find and secure them (protagonist and companions set out to acquire an important object or get to a location) while fending off governmental resistance and protecting the communities where those resources exist. (They face temptations and other obstacles along the way.)

4. Voyage and Return

The cost and health risks of low poultry standards demand another solution. We went to the remote Andes (protagonist goes to a strange land) to work side by side with native farmers fighting a daily battle against famine and disease (overcoming the threats it poses) in order to perfect a new, humane, and completely clean system of serving mass demand for poultry. (Learning important lessons unique to that location, they return with experience.)

5. Comedy

People ask where a pizza-delivering, goofy-looking high school dropout like me got the idea for Skooble (light and humorous character with a cheerful ending), and I tell them, "Want to get inspired to make money really quickly? Try being a pizza-delivering, goofy-looking high school dropout!" (Triumph over adverse circumstances, resulting in a successful or happy conclusion.)

6. Tragedy

I became an addict when I was 28 (protagonist is a hero with a major character flaw or great mistake), which led to the loss of my company, valued at over $400 million. This plunged my 330 employees into unemployment (which is ultimately their undoing). I had it all, along with a solution that was going to change our sector forever. Now I try to help others realize their goals in a way I couldn't (protagonist evokes pity at their folly and the fall of a fundamentally good character).

7. Rebirth

I became an addict when I was 28, which led to the loss of my company and plunged my amazing 330 employees into unemployment. That was my wake-up call, the shock that turned my focus from making money to helping other addicts keep their companies, protect their employees, and bring their brilliant and necessary solutions to a hungry market. (An event forces the main character to change their ways and often become a better individual.)